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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UNFICYP](#) [CY](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: CYPRUS: MFA INSISTENT THAT TURKEY MEET EU
OBLIGATIONS

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Classified By: Ambassador Frank C. Urbancic, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkey's EU path toward EU membership looks littered with obstacles, most of Ankara's own making, Cypriot MFA Permanent Secretary (D-equivalent) Nicolas Emiliou told visiting DAS Matthew Bryza on January 14. Emiliou noted that Turkey had failed to meet any of the obligations it had undertaken upon the commencement of accession talks in 2005, foremost among them normalizing relations with Cyprus and contributing positively toward a lasting settlement on the island. While a Turkey no longer pursuing EU-mandated reforms harmed no country more than Cyprus, the government would not compromise its fundamental positions in the run-up to the December European Council meeting, Emiliou contended; as such, a breakthrough in the Cyprus negotiations before fall looked imperative. Cyprus remained receptive to exploring ways to improve EU-NATO coordination and thereby help clear the way for allowing Turkey to open the energy chapter in the EU Acqui. Emiliou also urged a push for Cypriot accession to the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP). END SUMMARY.

Coming Months Crucial

[1](#)2. (C) Squeezed between meetings with Cypriot leaders Demetris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat (Septels), visiting EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Bryza on January 14 called on MFA Number 2 Nicolas Emiliou. Emiliou, Cyprus's former PermRep in Brussels, concentrated on EU matters during the meeting, primarily Turkey's EU accession course. The coming months were crucial for Ankara's chances, he reasoned. Member States in 2006 had stipulated an overall assessment of Turkey in December 2009, and Emiliou worried that accession progress had slowed considerably.

[1](#)3. (C) Eight Acquis chapters remained formally blocked via the Council's December 2006 decision, he noted. France had sidelined a further five, claiming they presupposed Ankara's eventual full accession, which President Sarkozy opposed. Other member states questioned Turkey's commitment to freedom of speech, religion, and human rights, and likely would block movement on these Acquis discussions. And Cyprus was informally holding up progress on another four or five, including Energy, Education/Culture, and CFSP, citing Cyprus Problem-related equities. Progress occurring so far had been limited to "technical chapters" and their numbers were rapidly diminishing. Emiliou thought the Czechs might succeed in opening another one or two during the January-June EU presidency, but he envisioned no others before the

December showdown in Brussels.

Many Obligations, Few Successes

14. (C) Whether implicitly or explicitly, EU leaders in 2005 had specified Turkey's obligations toward the Union, Emiliou insisted. In seeking membership, Ankara was expected to fully implement the Additional Protocol to the Customs Union, normalize bilateral relations with Cyprus, recognize the RoC, and contribute positively to a settlement on the island. In none of the four was there measurable progress. Turkey might even have backtracked, he alleged, citing recent Turkish Navy harassment of RoC-charted seismic exploration vessels in Cyprus's claimed EEZ.

15. (C) The RoC and its EU "partners" had identified advances in these criteria fundamental in Turkey earning a positive assessment in December, Emiliou explained. This outcome seemed far-fetched without a significant breakthrough in the Cyprus talks. Without progress -- and the government was not prepared to compromise on gauging it -- the RoC would be forced to take a "profound" decision in December that had long-term strategic implications.

Not Deaf to Needs of Neighbors

16. (C) Emiliou accepted that Cyprus Problem-spawned friction caused problems and frustration off-island. His government was amenable to crafting workarounds, such as compromises to foster better EU-NATO cooperation in the Balkan and Afghan theaters. "Unfortunately," he claimed, "Turkey is not interested in compromise" and continued to insist in Cyprus's

exclusion from all EU-NATO discussions. He saw value in Brussels-based RoC experts engaging their U.S. counterparts to brainstorm, and pitched the idea for informal consultations.

17. (C) Bryza asked what it would take for Cyprus to soften its opposition to opening the Acquis chapter on energy with Turkey. Emiliou explained that France had hoped to open the chapter, but Turkey's recent saber-rattling in the Cypriot EEZ had forced the RoC to maintain its opposition to opening it. Room to maneuver still existed, however, with Emiliou revealing that Cyprus might reconsider its veto, were the Turks to call their ships home, halt provocative statements, and remove "offending" territorial claims from government websites. "We might have understood their behavior if Cyprus was exploring northeast of the island, closer to Turkey. But these incidents occurred far from her shores," he ended. Bryza suggested that perhaps the U.S. and Cyprus could create a more positive diplomatic climate, which might allow Nicosia to allow the energy chapter to open, by convening meetings of experts in Brussels to explore possible information sharing between ESDP and NATO operations for Turkey and Cyprus, respectively. Emiliou agreed to explore this proposal, and granted Bryza permission to note Cyprus's "flexible position" on energy during his stop in Turkey.

Problems, Yes, But how to Solve?

18. (C) Bryza agreed that Turkey's progress toward EU membership had slowed. Reforms were ever more difficult to pass, for example. Worse, he had witnessed a palpable decline in interest amongst both Turkish elites and the rank-and-file. Ankara's obligations to the European Union were clear, however, and the U.S. would not push to dilute them. U.S. strategic interests were not furthered by simple EU membership, he clarified. We, like Europe, actually wished to see a more modern, democratic, prosperous Turkey, which by nature would be a stronger, more reliable ally. The prospect of EU membership provided a key incentive for Turkey to continue on the tough path of reform.

19. (C) The December assessment would force the Turkish government into a difficult decision: whether to make "concessions" on Cyprus in honoring its EU obligations that could cause domestic political backlash. Bryza doubted the

Turks were ready to make that choice, and instead were likely to seek to incorporate concessions on ports into a comprehensive agreement. He thought the time had passed for a package on ports, such as the Fall 2006 Finnish initiative that involved a combination of Turkish port openings to RoC vessels/planes and the opening of the T/C-administered port of Famagusta for EU trade, or the more expansive package Bryza had pursued in late 2006 that also included the possible opening of Ercan Airport and a moratorium on development of disputed tourism properties in the north.

One Last Request

¶10. (C) Emiliou ended the call by raising the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP). Cyprus was amongst a handful of EU member states not belonging to VWP, an unfortunate reality he hoped to change. "For psychological reasons, we need to participate," he asserted, noting also that Cyprus had made great progress recently toward entry into the Schengen arrangement. The Ambassador committed to following up locally and with Washington.

¶11. (U) DAS Bryza has cleared this message.
Urbancic